

24 January 1968

Mr. William O'Connell
4175 Stanbury Avenue
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Dear Bill,

There seems to be no reason why you should not share in the distribution of copies of Ray's letter to me of 1/18/68, sent by Ray to the somewhat restricted and select group composed of Arnoni and Salandria. Consequently, I enclose a xerox for your edification. I do not intend to reply to Ray. However, in the event that you find yourself involved in discussion of his bill of particulars and document of excommunication, I will make a few comments which you should have at your disposal. I have numbered Ray's paragraphs, for ease of reference.

(1) Ray has cornered the market on objectivity. As one of two direct parties to the dispute, he is naturally more objective than those whose opinion and support he solicited.

(2) I am, of course, not "irrevocably committed" to Thompson or anyone else--not even Ray. I have serious disagreements with Thompson (on the anterior neck wound, the souvenir-hunter hypothesis, and related questions) and growing irritation with his equivocations about Garrison.

(4) I did think Ray's request for credit unusual, accompanied as it was by massive explanatory essays and self-justifications, to other critics and to me. I always feel surprised when a researcher is more preoccupied with credit for evidence or arguments than with the arguments or evidence as such. Furthermore, evidence which may be of paramount value in Ray's own monograph or in his estimation may nevertheless become secondary or marginal in the context of another's work. I do think that it was and is essentially secondary or incidental in the context of Accessories as a whole, or even in the context of the chapter(s) in which the switch of frames 314 and 315 was mentioned.

(8) When Ray is right, he's right, and there's no getting away from it: "Whose Stretcher?" indisputably is not identical with "Which Stretcher?"

(11) and (12) I never said I was referring to CE 399. I said "in effect."

(13) I am prejudiced in Tink's favor because he writes shorter letters. (Incidentally, the enclosed 7-page letter from Ray, plus his 22-page and 10-page letters to Tink total 39 single-space pages, or a larger body of text than his 70-odd double-space pages of The Bastard Bullet. I think the critical "fraternity" might reach agreement to limit disputation for credits to a maximum of, say, 15 or 20 per cent of the substantive work in question.)

(15) I have already explained to Ray, in an earlier letter, that my comment referred to casual visual examination, not to measurements or analysis.

(16) Oh, gosh, gee whiz...

(19) It was not a voluntary but a paid assignment, limited to checking the citations from the Hearings and Exhibits for accuracy and to indexing the book. I volunteered certain other comments or suggestions, as and when they occurred to me, but I did not check the contents or the arguments or the attributions--all of which are the responsibility of the author. I am responsible only for what appears in my own book.

(20) Since Thompson's footnote attributed independent discovery of the double head-hit both to Marcus and Weisberg, there was no apparent issue raised in the ms. of exclusivity, priority, or independence of discovery.

While I didn't review the ms. specifically for spelling errors, I did flag those which I happened to notice. Someone should do the same for Ray ("brutely frank," "accreditation," etc.).

(21) I acknowledge my "total failure to ask Thompson" to "properly credit" Ray...or myself, for that matter. In fact, it never entered my mind to worry about Ray's credits. I did "worry" about a reference to Epstein which baldly said that Salandria, rather than Epstein himself, had found and brought to light the two FBI Reports (December 9 and January 13), which I knew to be inaccurate.

(23) and (32) Ray may accuse Thompson of being a federal agent on the basis of unrevealed "evidence" but if I am privy to confidential information about Garrison's case (RFK and I?), I should not use it as a basis for excoriation. Here is quintessential Marcusian logic...objectivity...and crap-artistry...

(25) Most of Garrison's "specific moves" consist of seeking headlines with lurid, unsupported, and ludicrous pronouncements that can by no stretch of imagination be considered relevant to the Clay Shaw trial, if and when it takes place. One example is his fanciful claim that Oswald forewarned the FBI on 11/17/63 that an assassination attempt would be made in Dallas.

It is time that Ray gave his attention to the phenomenon of Garrison's constant compulsion to make public charges, allegations, or assertions for which he "cannot yet reveal" an evidenciary basis. Has the charge any value without accompanying proof or evidence? other than headlines? And how much borrowing credit in terms of faith or confidence should be extended to Garrison (and for how long) pending presentation of the proof or evidence? Should we make no "final judgments" on, say, the idiotic "code" or the assassin in the sewer shooting a 45, on the ground that if and when the trial takes place these items of nonsense may somehow be endowed with credibility? Should we make no "final judgments" on the integrity of a man who persists in accusations such as the alleged destruction by thermofax of a secret CIA document, even after it has been pointed out to him that other copies exist?

(26) Of course I want Shaw to have the opportunity to clear his name in a public trial. The so-called evidence against him is a compound of fabrication and absurdity. It would be preferable, of course, if Garrison had the decency to withdraw the charges and drop the case; but since he does not so do, why, of course I want Shaw and any other accused party to exercise every civil and legal right of self-defense. Indeed, he should have the option of instituting a suit for false arrest, slander and libel.

(28) These reservers-of-judgment and uncommitted observers engage in a noteworthy amount of fund-raising, pro-Garrison interviews to the press, and superhuman self-restraint with respect to his blatant offenses against fact and credibility, about which no 7-page, 10-page, or 22-page letters of indignation or recrimination have yet, to my knowledge, been written. (Ray left out some of my terminology--e.g., Garrison entourage, Garrison asslickers, etc.)

(31) I think he should be arrested, for malfeasance, together with Specter, Warren, and other members of the coterie.

(32) As asked above: Why does he reveal his accusations when he does not reveal the corresponding evidence, persistently and continuously, on matters

unrelated to the Shaw trial or to any other legitimate functions of a district attorney?

(33) Yes, I will defend ANYONE against unsupported charges of complicity and coverup. But I do charge the Warren Commission and the authorities with being accessories after the fact, on the basis of chapter and verse. Yet I am a "defender of the Establishment"? Ray would not have so much trouble in achieving logic if he dealt steadfastly with principles instead of persons ...but then, he might have to denounce Garrison for the charlatan he is, which obviously he will do anything but.

And look at the beautiful line of logic in this little paragraph: In insisting on the rights of the accused individual, I have become a defender of the State! In the Shaw case, Garrison is the State--the prosecutor. Just how am I defending ~~me~~ whom I'm attacking?

(34) Does Ray mean that Garrison should be permitted to use every public media to prove himself a knave, a fool, and a charlatan, but that everyone should be silent until he proves it again in court?

(37) Garrison did not subpoena the three men I named. He subpoenaed two of them and a third person whose name was unknown to me. He subpoenaed these men not on the specific issue of the Odio visit but on allegations that they were in Dallas on 11/22/63 and could give information on the shooting. I have no reason to believe that they were in Dallas at the time, much less that they were in Dealey Plaza.

(38) Gee, if only I could be as 'umble, modest, and heroically self-abnegating as Ray Marcus! Wouldn't I be adorable...?

(39) Actually, it was not at all painful. Not only did I enjoy the letter (especially the exposition of the difference between "Whose Stretcher?" and "Which Stretcher"), but I amused myself by leaving the envelope sealed and the contents unread for 24 hours, during which I reconstructed the probable contents. My projection turned out to be about 85% accurate and complete. However, I should not get undue credit for this feat--it was really very simple. I merely projected what Harold Weisberg might have written, in Ray's place, and, voila!

(40) and (41) I can only surrender and bow my head before this spectacle of omniscience and infallibility. Nowhere in these 7 pages (or in the 39, for that matter) does Ray reveal anything less than absolute immunity from self-questioning or self-criticism. This can only signify a perfect certainty of perfection--politically, morally, and intellectually. Morass to be pitied than blamed. In factional psychoanalysis, a veritable Dr. Humes.

To be serious for a moment, Bill, let me suggest that you not let it be known that you have any knowledge of Ray's letter to me. The worst thing that can be done to a self-important prig of his caliber is to ignore him and his interminable communiques. This commentary is mainly for amusement, with a few factual clarifications which may be useful if Ray himself initiates discussion, to be used (or not used) at your own discretion. I don't know what Vince's reaction is (and don't care, although I suspect he will come staunchly to my defense--he has burned his fingers already in the flames of Marcusian doctrine), but as for Arnoni---he was convulsed, first with laughter, then with disbelief, then with despair for the human animal. He is toying with the idea of writing a mock-serious letter to Ray, which Ray will receive as gospel but everyone else will recognize as a put-on, in which he will announce his conversion and support Ray's catalogue of complaints against me, and then more or less tell me never again to darken his pages. Gives me something to

look forward to, in addition to the possibility of supplemental sermons from Marcus. Verily, he is the dead end. Nor worth three single-space pages, except that it takes my mind off genuine sorrows. Always,